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Statement submitted by European Disability Forum, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

European Disability Forum welcomes the theme "Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future". The Forum is encouraging Governments to realize a disability-inclusive post-2015 development agenda.

There is wide recognition that progress within the existing Millennium Development Goals framework has not been equitable and that persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among those left behind by recent development gains. Intra-country inequalities have widened, in which persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented.

Challenges for persons with disabilities are as follows:

(a) Persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to participation in society, including access to development programmes and funds, education, employment, health care and communication and transportation services;

(b) Persons with disabilities are particularly at risk with respect to the effects of climate change, such as natural disasters and food insecurity, and are also more vulnerable in situations of conflict;

(c) Invisibility of persons with disabilities in the original Millennium Development Goals was accompanied by lack of data on persons with disabilities; this has led to an underestimation of their demographic importance;

(d) Representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities were not involved in the Millennium Development Goal process.

The organization recommends the following for sustaining gains in the future:

(a) Disaggregated data on persons with disabilities: In the past, many quantitative instruments, especially in developing countries, employed methodologies that greatly undercounted persons with disabilities. Recent advances in methods of identifying persons with disabilities through surveys, censuses and administrative data systems are improving the ability to develop, monitor and evaluate policies aimed at promoting inclusion in an internationally comparative way;

(b) Inequalities must be tackled across all new goals according to the "leave no one behind" principle. Learning from gaps in the Millennium Development Goal process, the post-2015 development agenda needs to be based on human rights and address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. When everyone, irrespective of household income, gender, location, ethnicity, age or disability, has access to health care, nutrition, education and other vital services, many of the worst effects of inequality will cease;

(c) Targets that are inclusive of persons with disabilities need to promote inclusion of and accessibility for persons with disabilities. The September 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities set out very clear commitments on ensuring accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development and of giving due consideration to all persons with disabilities in the emerging post-2015 United

Nations development agenda. Specific targets and indicators related to the availability of required enabling structural factors are needed.

The inclusion of persons with disabilities will largely contribute to the eradication of poverty. An inclusive society for all cannot be achieved without the global empowerment of persons with disabilities.